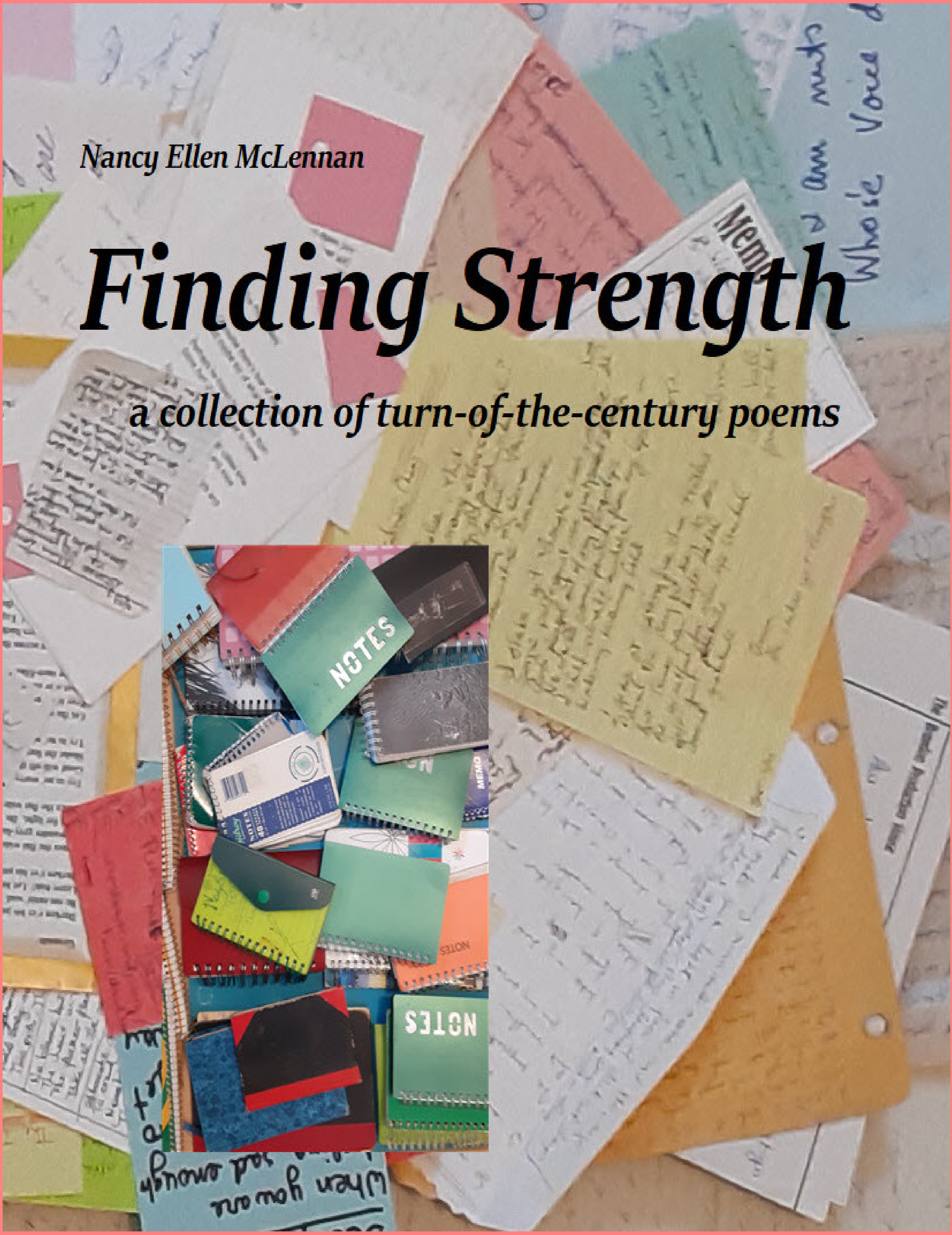
Nancy Ellen McLennan

# Finding Strength

## a collection of turn-of-the-century poems



Finding Strength – a collection of turn-of-the-century poems

McLennan

~bph

# Finding Strength

a collection of

# turn-of-the-century poems

by nancy ellen mclennan

*Dedicated to the ones*

*who are still too shy to voice*

*these kinds of realities.*

bph~publications

Finding Strength - a collection of turn-of-the-century poems

First Edition

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# Forward

The poet does not expect the reader to connect to every poem in this collection.  Some poems may seem silly, or odd, or brazen.

Some may not invite the reader in.

But if a reader stops on a page,

and follows the text to the bottom of that page,

and ponders, or makes a face, or leans back, or connects in any way at all,

then the poem has made a journey

from the untouchable synapses within the poet's mind

to that same intangible electronic soup in the mind of the reader.

Poems are fun.

They can trigger emotion, so take care.

Laugh, or sigh, or share.

Set the book aside.

Pick it up again.

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# Part 1 – The Closing Decade

## years 1993-1999

# 1993 Anchors

To save the address books and sit yourself in one same spot

Is how to watch the world to move the people yaw and pitch from you

A few like you do sit so that the web has points to anchor

And time makes short stays anchor others in the face of dangling permanence

So look back into the cone of time and faces and places and wonder

See some dead and some not yet who now are front and centre

Think you that your list should shrink  - phoo to those who drift away

Yearn you to share again their spark – that spark that only friends can make.

Anchors they be though move they may

They twist the web and change your day.

# 1995 Listen to the Words Not Spoken

The frozen silence.
The silence when words fail.
The unspeakably obvious
Leaves you teetering over the chasm
You lean, you reach, you contemplate the leap.

Then, the abruptly spoken
Brakes the momentum.
The obvious still pondered
Rests as a smile, a memory of the perch
From where the other side remains silently visible.

But, the depth cannot be gauged
The distance neither.
Either line or canyon.
The possibilities between remain countless
As long as silence holds the balance of power.

# *1996* Wellman Lake Axeman

Stands in waite
Hunts us all
The quiet nights are worst
You feel the presence.

She delivers a chill
It is felt by all
Nothing gets said
Again.

How long has it been?
Since the beginning
Everybody has always remembered
The Wellman Lake Axeman

Don’t feel silly and

Be smart

Say no more and

Wait for wind and rain.

# *1998* Punch out the Boys

Such tender helpless beauty with minds grasping

And me, the focus with the power to paint

And grow they do.

One and then another and soon together grasping

And reading it all their world and me

And wailing called for all

Then their world came in and bounced inside them grasping

Pulling outside what was there so far

Hooking it with home

They then were freed to choose their sights and sounds still grasping

Barbaric imbalance civilized stimuli

While beginnings anchored only

Finally the bounce the random plunge away while forward grasping

At sure unknowns so sure some how

Because of where they were

And now they march and leave me helpless grasping.

## *1998* Stripping Dignity

In the North End

(and maybe everywhere)

The boys are really coy.

They hang together still

And never come to ask the dance

Not like in the movies

(or maybe everywhere)

So then I must

(and maybe all girls do)

Strip off that wait and see

Leave my pack behind

And slip beneath their no eye glance

And make my moves

(or maybe all girls do)

## *1999* Away Away

Away Away from the tangled net of faces and souls and deceitful intent

Cry in the streets and beckon again till you hear the ones who knew what you meant

Take no more time in the lonely halls where passing limbs scurry vacant lament

Move with glee in the empty crystal clarity there where the message was sent

Grab the thought from the dancing air make the fantasy spent

Bleed no more from the forceful wishes of minds so bent

Pick the path the assent

## *1999* Dear Davey

My first dream came last night
Well truly, just past dawn
Exactly nearly thirty days since
You were here then gone.

I had you in my head those days
I conjured ecstasies
And then you left.  We went our ways
To dive in private seas.

So there it was and it was you
I worked to make repair
With hammer and a one-inch nail
Somehow to fix your clavicle

The left side first

You had no shirt
We chatted fine and lightly

Then came time to drive the nail
I placed it on your skin
I tack-hammered into the bone
The small nail drove within

You didn’t mind you knew the need
It was a simple chore
And then you turned toward your right
As I prepared for more.

--->

The second nail was put in place
To fix what had gone wrong
But no, alas, we smelled we leaned we twisted
T’ward.  The chore was gone.

The focus changed.  I saw myself
And you within my arms
I stood. Your head was at my breast
You sat in twisted form

We went no further for I woke
With wondrous sense of you
So close, so calm against my skin
With one nail driven through.

# *1999* Doom

Days of Doom take over

We nurture them they feel so real

Forget the sunny flower’s bloom

Hear not the birds nor cricket's chirp

Step down not up see not the blue

Bright blue in eyes and skies and cries

Take over every sound you hear

The wish for more disdain grows strong

And soon you self fulfill the day

And doom steps in to take her pay

In tears and lines and hearty pain

And sideways stares where friends remain

Thank doom for day's long shadow cast

Please please leave me in good days passed.

# *1999* Socks for Morons

Distinctly mixed so sensible.

Colourfully pale the tasteful touch

Luxurious sparce.  The way it should be

Black and white n’er gray.

Fruitful baron thoughts exude

Wry somber runs the attitude

Sincerely preoccupied the face

True and false - each way.

Hope and bitterness lay awake

Relaxing efficiently for sure

Attempting perfection constantly

Love and hate – you say.

# *1999* Stick a pin in friendship

Stick a pin in friendship and call it sex
Or put a mask on sex and call it friendship

Between, there lies a love that boils steadily
And dances just to be alive each day

Such travesties destroy the flower’s bloom
Erase the smiles of joy
Such easy love and natural to give
Twixt girl and boy

# *1999* The Game Called Lust

She loves me

Yes she does

She looks my way and smiles

She wants me

I know she must

Or is this just that game called lust?

He takes it

He gets that buzz

He moves his shoulders so

He likes it

He gets his just

Oh yes it’s in that game called lust

They want more

They breathe because

They dance the circle tighter

They sniff twice
It’s there or bust
The tantalizing game called lust

Apart now
They break no laws
They leave it in their heads
They conjure
Afraid to trust

Rewarded  in the game called lust

# Part 2 – The New Millennium

## the year two thousand

## *2000* Banished Shunned

Today the strange dank senses
Lift again
Through eyes and sideways glances
Through words n'er spake, again the same
What gives?  Why here?
What path is being blocked and why go at all?
Who lies there?  What need begs me yonder?

She seemed some insincere - whisking me away
Am I the same for reasons untoward?
They seemed to smile together.  Circle formed
Making boundaries firmly

Yet a friend did come and listen and speak sense
And seem to hear.  Just one.  Thank God for one.
As shame-faced feelings rattle my smile
And make me wonder if I'm dancing solo

Out of time, adrift or simply

Banished.

## *2000* Certain Sense of Love

Pleading and begging and praying full force

Has never delivered my love, of course

It cannot be willed here from vacuum thin air

So sullen acceptance must render despair

And turn inside out the intent for the call

The love would be fine but my soul takes the fall

For the sake of some willfullness under my breast

I give up my soul and can’t salvage the rest

So circular spiralling calling for peace

Never ending desire for sense and release

From the love back to duty and matter fact days

Back forward 'neath over out every ways

Soon resolving that this is the journey my grant

She is in me she is with me she is my psychophant

My goddess my spirit my energy source

She’s love with a focus.  She’s dead end of course

Accepted, no burden is borne of her weight

Empowered to breathlessness love comes too late

# *2000* Deliver me

Deliver me from this passionate obsession
Because You must
The quivering is cloaking my intention
So full Not lust
A river bleeds my hair roots to recession
No fuel Robust
Delivery me from this passionate obsession
Just make Me dust.

Glory be such passion in its tension
What can It be?
So sorry to be loving this extension
Of life. Glory!
The story of such ethereal a lesson
Will end. You'll see.
So pour me one more cup o' aforemention
Release My spree!

Shifting passion back and forth infinite

See Saw Waken!

Does one grasp a stop or 'stead ignite

The friction? Shaken!

Affront the tumult knocks remain polite

The eyes Forsaken

Passion!  Passion!  Dance me with your might

Else heart Be Breakin'.

# *2000* Deny Spell Cast

Now you know I watched you
I let it slip to see
If it would make you wonder
Anything at all ‘bout me

But no, it only irked you
Or p’chance bolstered your fur
It must’ve been alt choses I’d seen
I wonder what they were

Those chats with other people
I’d view from ‘cross the room
Your head would tilt
Your hands would fly
I’d even see the sparkling eye
And catch a word upon the fly
And ponder you in bloom

You did not know, or did you?

I felt you dance for me

You knew I saw and heard and felt

You feigned oblivion though a celt

I trust you ‘cept I know the spell to

Me was cast by thee.

# *2000* Depths to Depths

"Gracious me" she cried

Her hands clapped on her cheeks

Nobody saw inside

Her voice lingered for weeks

"My Gosh" was all she'd say

And look toward the skies

Folks gently looked away

And feigned there were no cries

"My breath, my breath" she'd sigh

And grasped a chair behind

One glance from passers by

Who knew she'd lost her mind

“Ah yes, I see” the moan did come
By then no folks were near
To see her solve her conundrum
And shed a single tear

“I’m saved” she coldly spoke
To thin air in her midst
And silently methodically
She sat and slit her wrist

“My My” the heads shook slowly
“Oh Well”  “Who would have thought”
All felt still pure and holy
And instantly forgot

## *2000* Embark Sara

The younger woman in me
Sees you bright-eyed brainy
Yearns to warn and mother
But won't paint paths so rainy

We all do know where we go
And you yes you must wander
Fear not ever future
Trust and you'll n'er blunder

Trust in yourself and only
Listen widely to those choices
Wide-eyed large steps forward
Hear all voices

Ah Lassie she's a wondrous journey

More smiles and wonder than grief

So n'er be tender with the march

Else gushing heart beats brief

## *2000* Faith in Me

The block is just too large
The gap is vast, so vast
The dreams remain so real
Yet flicker fast

Gratitude for those
The ones who truly care
They mean the world to me
In my despair

Somehow still I cannot
Entrench their love enough
It gives me hope, not strength
As roads are rough

So knowing of their faith

That I do not desert

That I am not all lost

Allays the hurt

# *2000* Find  Your Place

Find your place

It’s not far off

The folks will welcome

And you’ll relax in smile

Flick away the chips

Watch them fly

Step upward forward

Chest first.  Chin high

Lift the brows and feel

The smile enrich your glow

Lightly Fondly Disappear

Just go.

# *2000* Grounds

Darken e'er his path no more

Be not eatin' soul

Leave him!  Let him!  Final roar!

Darken e'er his path no more

Dance the flat wide road now - choose

Or wander grey-faced

Wait for light.  Do n' abuse!

Dance the flat wide road now - choose!

Try to no' worry 'bout days ahead

Good will sift through

Shake the fear of lone-struck dread

Try to no' worry 'bout days ahead

Eat the once-filled heart of joy.

Pray it's n'er destroyed
Covet n'er one thought o' boy
Eat the once-filled heart of joy

Journey yet across the earth
Leave the others back
Bolster!  Absorb!  Exploit your birth!
Journey yet across the earth

--->

What if he calls?  How do I go?
His role was dream't by me!
What if he calls?  Can I say no?
What if he calls?  How do I go?

I'll let him in if so chooses he
But nay not me
I'll pray he'll choose to let me be
I'll let him in if so chooses he

Be it so I still shall darken n'er
His life.  I'll only wait.
I'll move with him if he says where
Be it so I still shall darken n'er

# *2000* Inquisitions

Who said the love
So unrequited
Was a sufferable
Destiny.  Who said?

Who knows the joy
So dreamy light
That stays beside
The empty rooms.  Who knows?

What eats the soul
When all is void
And nothing calls
My name.  What eats?

Where goes a heart

So open wide
To catch just nothing
There.  Where goes?

Who shows me how
To feel anew
Some passion plays or
Happy days.  Who shows?

Why though do people think
That love's so sad
If only one's around to
Feel.  Why though?

# *2000* New Dawn of Love

So now I grieve the love that never was.
No time nor place could puncture it because
No grant to taste its fruit was ever given
So left was I to measure it with heaven

Its vastness and its glory shook my soul
I faced it as a tidal wave’s full roll
Yet firm stood I determined to endure
So love again might find me true and pure

Amen

## *2000* Pretense

We think we know
But shall not show
The insight wisdom
Right way though

Instead we'll wait
Let them dictate
Their hand Their track
As we contemplate

The manoeuvre way
Strategy play
Our path one above
Their banal outlay

Of chaotic trite

Misdirected might

Their laughable

Pitiable Useless Plight.

# *2000* Purging Inventory

List their

NAMES

Draw their

FACES

Chart their

PATHS

Note their

HANDLES

Mark their

HOMES

Then

DELETE

## *2000* Say a Little Prayer for Me

Spit Edgy Persona Lately Stop

Wondering Twitch Indicator? Stop

Advise-taking Marginal Stop

## *2000* Shaving myself away

The good was always the goal
'Til folly rode my shoulder.
She whistled in my ear.
Made me see new light,
Feel new life
And change the colour of that destination.

So 'mid dreams and drifting
Choices changed and listed
Relentlessly in my brain.
Gave me fuel for clearer sight.
Yes.  Sparked strife
As folly teetered high in my deliberation.

So who is she that darkens my dream?
Makes closed the other paths?
Eyes! Be clear!  Cloud not!

Dig deeper for your might!

Cut not knife!

Build 'stead renewed invigoration.

## *2000* Six Fifty Five

Here now, take may callous soul

The tender one’s been trod

Flushéd down the toilet bowl

Vanquished.  Last Hurrah’d!

Teeth-clenched grins with darting glance

Now direct my melt

Soft smiles dreamy sighs hopeless circumstance

All discarded pelt

So shed are those old fashioned ways

Crystal clear and now

Sharper corners.  Brighter days

After one last bow.

# *2000* The Forest I Am

The forest's full, chock full it seems
The sounds make din the silence screams
Of what lies there, beneath the skies
And blends to landscapes in our eyes.

So then we learn, we look around
We classify each sight and sound
Some things we come to know for sure
But yet she's blanket background blur

Buzzes, calls, rustles, whirrs
Tiny greens, crispy spurs
Spongy wet trickily dews
Hot dry steep firm scattered clues

So ask, compare, remember smells

Divine the sense of once cast spells
That drive the soul of forests deep
Believe the science Believe but keep

The sense of wonder for all's not known
The mystics too heed winds past blown
And offer sense to what we see
With eyes tight closed we turn to tree.

We stand in darkness locked to earth
We have a view.  We spread our birth
Beyond perspective voyeur judge
Become within.  True tutelage

--->

Now it happens all around
The forest lives within our bound
We bleed with it.  We breathe it whole
It makes us.  Is us.  Heart and soul.

Next we enter forest nights
Where skies build edges giving light
So sounds become the canvas where
The wind backdrops what's lying there.
She comes and goes to let us hear
Who's awake or startled near.
What moves?  What rests awaiting dawn?
What eyes, what wings, what fins, what spawn

Remains awake as earth, she spins?
Who grows a leaf nigh day begins
In forest thick with living mesh
Who sheds a cone?  What enters fresh

To add a family member mid
This silent chatter.  Something did!
I know it's so!  I stood dead still

And listen and watched and smelled until

I felt the change as she evolved
I felt the dance as we revolved
This forest knows the passing days
Much more than I.  Just count the ways.

## *2000* The Impossibility

The impossibility of it all
Did not prevent my quest
So destined for a fall
Was I.  Now rest

Has landed ‘cross my back
I see three years hence passed
And set free now through crack
Hair Thin.  At last

My breaths again move free
Of yearn of shame of gap
And strength feel I to stand and see
It whole.  A slap

Across my cheek awakens time

And dances daylight here

Where true regret I did not get

What was not there is clear.

## *2000* The Otherworld

Every night I have the strangest dream
My eyes see folks I knew
They pass and act and things are as they seem
Yet always I see through

We travel in plain odd and crazy circumstance
They seem to not see me
Unheeded they portray themselves as in a trance
While calmly I let them be

I love them all so deeply though they’re cruel
I smile as torture drives
They smile unconscious to the golden rule
And rush to spend their lives

So strange there’s never sorrow there nor fear

And feelings run so cold
So nice it makes such sense when they appear
As random dreams unfold

They link, these dreams, to one another still
They live in isolation
As the wakened world brings reason to a human will
That shows no hesitation.

## *2000* The Possibilities

Of course there’s fear of my odd melt
And maybe too of what he’s felt

Perhaps he hopes to save me from
Some hurt of sorts still yet to come

So clear would be the gap called time
Discomfort place his face and mine

Or maybe he just hates my guts and
Knows not how to say it but is

Cruel and loves the dangling taunt
Or feels dismay from moral haunt

Still, there could be others who
Do take his thoughts as I pass through

He thinks it’s kind to glance the blow
That time will let these feelings go

I hope he does not mend some hurt
And that ours was no empty flirt.

## *2000* Unrequited love

Suffer naught
The unrequited love
Find your pain
Herein

Then venture forth
Past page to brighter days
Have faith
Begin

The journey’s worth the ride
Each bump and toll
You pay
Makes sense in retrospect
One fine day

But bleed it full else folly shows her face
And anger shame
Humiliation breeds
Disgrace

No!  Trust
With these spent lines
Of chaos good intent
That through the dark and burdened cloud
In grace, we do relent

## *2000* Yearning for Winter White

Glory of morning
Forest morning
Windless September morning

The mist so thick it’s fog at first
The spiders' webs grab it and become solid and gorgeous
There is no horizon
There is no sound but for cocky crows above the cloud and hidden loons within

Then the warm sun dissolves the white haze
First the nearest parts then distant shores become shadows
Evidence unfolds of the beaver’s late-night chores
The grass pressed flat, the twigs left back
The path much longer than we’d ever expect

The sky today is blue as blue

The sun is destined to be warm

A windless anomaly big tree falls not far away

Just because its time has come

The mushrooms are excited

Puncturing the atmosphere

Phallic first then stretching, stretching into Lewis Carroll’s form

The lake was glassy smooth at first

An now it has that gentle ripply look

Like an old lady’s skin, a freckly skin

--->

The flies move slowly these days as the morning warmth
gradually sparks them

All is still green, well most

Some aspen yellow bodes of cool then cold

It’s forest in its annual buxom beauty

Ferns full grown

Shrubs’ leaves broad

Bog bottom full carpet thick and walkable, not wet

I heard the geese last night.

Though today is summer full

I yearn for winter white

And feel its healthy pull

# Part 3 – The New Century

## 2001 and 2002

## *2001* Another Woman

I am just another woman

A cone a-filled with prediction

Sit still and wait and soon

Each trait you hate evicts and

Points me beigey background

Scarce a seam unique depiction

Me as a person first.

These common ways are bright encryption

Themes of life for your buoyance

Alas to also lay crisp friction

So smooth re-entry by just one’s

A farce.  A dereliction

## *2001* Boy Man God

How is it that young boys do play

Around the world each passing day

A paper bag, a kicking stone

A stick, a string, a stroll alone

Or with another sweatered friend

To laugh and dream of days back when

The Saracens would loot our town

Or stone men rolled the pillars down

The ramps upon the stony pier

To grasp the ropes to drag them near

The cliff so grownups here could pray

That we would have a better day

But now we only jump the gap

Or snatch and toss our nike cap

And make the fool or watch the bird

Till woe, she drops and gives the word.

# *2001* Destined

You tell me of the ones before
And so, I too, portray the whore
And make as though I’ve seen it all
These bits of trash could be our fall

The woman who begged for kitchen sex
The gal whose child was yours
The tight stimulation of the German girl
No none of these were whores

The Swedish art administrator
The tom-girl in the bush
The first love panting breath baiter
A Paris, d’Odessa, La Loche

I’ve never ever done that before

Hey this usually works for me
My experience renders me a whore
Yours paints you a stud man free

In truth, it’s only me and you
The others block our joy
Divert the path, delimit the ways
Of love girl of love boy

--->

Oh yes, I can compare my tries
With those we launch each day
Oh yes I can place others here
To try to point the way

But something deep inside me says
That more’s ahead and new
Unless I beckon past old ways
Yet that’s just what we do.

## *2001* Goddess Queen Siracusa

So stop then at Catània To fetch the wrong train south

Sweet youth face up in menstrual blood

The wingless sort carelessly litters the train station privy bin

Yet where mong the unabashed of the Sicilian women fair

Art the blood stained panties that they all must wear

Among the lines and lines and lines of fabric

Pinned each day from balcony?

None show there ‘stead this they hid

Some note is spoken – rebel youth or free the femme

But not at home

No there she daintily trains the daughter,

“Drop me!  Drop me!” cry the crisp white sheets as they are gathered

from a fourth floor medieval balcony by a pierced Siracusa beauty in black.

--->

Alas!  ‘Tis so!
She floats below
Into the gutter
Dog shit low.
Small quiet low-pitched woe
A curse. But no
A cheer of youth to show
She shall not scrub and scrub each day
Will not if there’s another way
The world the world screams in to me
‘Mid stone and sea antiquity
And here I fit and here I sit
And grow to laugh and bleed and grit
My teeth as next in line to me
Comes shortly after breasts burst free
And boys will listen attentively
To me

## *2001* Free

set me free
or say hello
this empty space
is poison
to a woman
like me

have we grounds
or culture play
that strolls through time
to nowhere
so no one
can see

can I feel
your frustrated sigh
that oh no not again

does echo
but perhaps you
are free

you only balk
as forward I fly
just sad enough to sigh
to hope
these ruts duck
destiny

## *2001* Hanged, no Launched

She was a beauty in a music video with voice of Emmy Lou

She sang it forth with two men humming background hue

The song of Robin Hood or Jesse James or Bonnie and Clyde

A myth a long spent ballad out she cried

The folks all knew the tale and praised her voice

The image in their ears and minds made clear the choice

Her flowing hair between the men her cotton frock

With crisp white bands to tie it closed they watched the clock

You hang!  You die upon the rock despite your song

The three will suffer snuffed for songful wrong

The iron bars above your head will house the noose

And dangle thee above the sea by neck cut loose

Her song persisted as winds flew across her face

Her voice and beauty called the folk to dance in chase
And Radclive’s chore to call for steel to lift and drag
The threesome from the rock and o’er the crag

Was nigh and seconds hence still soft she sang
The cotton white tie blew with hair and voices rang
To give her arm the will to rise and reach the bar
Her long deft fingers clasped it eyes afar

And suddenly the song and frock and lady flew
Away back from between the men who knew
She’d set the people free with song and flight
And lifted backward skyward to the endless night

--->

Her flowing hair and crisp white frock can still be seen
Above the rocky wall and craggy green
And all the people, even Radclive, know she spent
Her song and beauty so the message could be sent.

## Part II Warning

With the myth in mind I calculated
And promised myself it was not a crime
I knew the verdict had been spent
But planned myself to press the key
To launch back flight to destiny
I had no perfect plan just hope
And Peek Freans to fulfill my final wish
One by one the bakery sweets were gone
The perfect rectangles of biscuit lined the box
Time was running out!  Only for to go
And then like she'd I'd launch aglow
No wrong for sure I must endure.
But still I fear my foolish pride.
Fear not! No time! The cookie box is all you have
To bless your passage back and up
Feet dangle skirts blow
And smaller I'll become and gone
No time my executor speaks.

So now I press the chocolate treat
And lo, it works the faith the key,
I’m gone to paint my destiny
What fool am I to venture back
In haughty pride to test my luck
I have not pureness of the song

--->

I must go see them wrong my wrong
How dare they try me since I’m gone
They witnessed how I flew away
And left the Peek Frean cookie tray
They matched my wronged wrong with hers
But why then try me?  Oh the curse
Of pride to make me want to see
And back track through my destiny
But lack I do, none know it's me
Note even mister magistree
The evidence in the cookie box
Is all they have to speak against
Peek Freany squares and circles there

No iced art and pastry dart

Are left to link me with that art

Oh no!  There’s one

A jam filled crème

Between vanilla chocolate dream

A little tart so dainty art

But ‘naught to paint me

Dead of heart

The mask God granted me is wiped

As soon as law connects the light

And all the glory of my flight

Is lost!  For naught!  This wicked night

When pride called “Dance you back there! See

How smart a woman you can be.”

But pride’s the voice n’er should I’ve heard

For captured now, here’s my last word.

The moral of the stories be

Turn not back if you’re set free

# *2001* I am none

I am not the woman who babysat your cat
No
I am not that

I am neither she who took the artist in
No
Not that one

And I did never plan long days with you
No
Could not do

I am none of them you duck and shun
No
I am none

## *2001* Illusive Light

What have we who seek the smile
And touch to know
We live?
Never cynic’s path we march
Lest jest’s dark misdirection
Give

Waiting for each spark that’s caused
By just the passing
Of our hair
And drinking every ounce each drop
Until it’s gone
From there

We haven’t much at all it seems
‘Cause passers by grow
Cold that soon

They too enjoy the sparkle there
But when it passes
With the moon

They simply shrug and seem to be
The blind now
Seeing past our eyes
Toward another glassy point
Of light where energy
Might rise

--->

It’s true we haven’t much but then
We have it all,
It can be said
Who else but we can drink the sweet
Of such a life
The luster bread

And who but we can then endure
The loss yet knowing
E’er it’s spent
With heart in hand and hope in heart
And chin held high we
N’er relent

# *2001* Just a Little Bad

I’d never told a soul before
Not Mom not he
It stayed with me
Since days long spent
And life full lived
I saw them sprint away.

So penned
With this old memory
Of laughing boys all around me
And one on top
And trusting him
All gawking at my freckled skin
And his little thing down there
He too felt odd above me where
The big boys tried to direct the play
And titalized they ducked to see

If it would stick itself in me

“Shuddup”, he said, “or I’ll tell Mom!”

I didn’t get it.  Why should I run

From those I trusted eat the chide

Each live long day, deep inside

--->

And now I cry I jump I run
From stone to stone
Toward the lane
They scatter fast to shed the blame
I cry for forty plus the years
I heave in gut long dry of tears

And then I seek and first tell you
And you just laugh – guess all boys do.

## *2001* Latent Resentments Rise

Say it again, how beautiful that woman was

How if only you weren’t married at the time

How single and forwardly she behaved

Say it again.

Tell me once more how horrible poodles are

Hear nothing of my praise see not my smile

For those you love and nurture

Tell me once more.

Remind me often, how far away I am

That home is really not here but for the economy

That culture elsewhere makes more sense than ours

Remind me often

Point it out for sure that with me nights are restless sleep is poor

How much you miss the quiet lane and hate the noise of small town streets

Your need for that routine, not this each day as seconds minutes hours tick you by

Point it out for sure.

And please do say if I share not what you

Fear to or hope to hear as days go by

And I will do my best to face our friendship full

Do say

But shelve your thoughts of how different I might be

And why you come around or speak to me at all

Yes make me wonder why on earth you wake to see my face.

Shelve them.

# *2001* Look not Wait not Want not

I crave the one who feels
And says the feelings out
Instead I find the ones who think
And leave me dancing doubt

I make my naked self at last
And wait for reciprocity
Alas the fear encloaks the face
And dance becomes atrocity

Static interference fuzz
Creates the blanket hanging twixt
I feel it yet no bounce means doubt
And thoughts collide and words lance mixed

The lesson?  Keep it coy and light

Lay low with private insights hence

Expect not links of core and strength

And shed chaotic slippery stance

# *2001* Love In the Seventh Decade

Put rollers in my hair
And take me to his bed
So if he wants to have my piece
My best and beauty’s in his head

I offer not the luring scent
That first day lustful smear has passed
So as I use my aging crème
He must force through to get my last

The breath no longer becomes his
The touches magnets not
The love must cease to know its birth
And drive with what it’s got

## *2001* Patterns

Your life is so fine, so right
And mine is smart progressive
All the choices that we’ve made we
Protect as obsessive

We patronize the choice
That each has made alone
And as the days shine less anew we
Feverently guard our own

First the little things
They’re cute and bother not
Yet soon we count these and annoyed we
Weigh them top the lot

And what escapes of this

Deep focus on the tiny
The vaster meaning darts as we
Paint meaning in the whiney.

Remember every day
What life has best to give
Deep soul counts naught while still do we
Thus shed heart’s fuel to live

# *2001* So Done I Cry (The Death of WB Yeats)

Who cares if I cry out loud

At the death of a man so long ago

Just to know he passed and was mourned

Makes tears flow

And much much more has brought this flush

The time the place the visions lost

Yet hopes are borne these long years past

Beneath the frost

In heat of January tides he left

Me here now under snow bound boughs

I hear his calamity and watch

His voice arouse

My soul and others too who know

He was just only just a man

But shrieking through he pushed for truth

I hope I can

# *2001* The Call

I got a call from an old lover yesterday

Felt funny seeing him in your light

Sure made me wonder, anyway

I guess it was all right

Out of the blue and there he was, surprise

The shock was what I couldn't say

It felt sort o' like telling lies

Like I'd lead him astray

Crazy really, that I'd halt like that

Thousands have had and do have this

A new lesson, this one left me flat

Of you of he I reminisce

## *2001* The Joining Game

In my dreams I see myself
I’ve always seen this side of me
A side the child the one outside
The others see her nuisancey

She fusses fusses round and round
Over interestingly
While others laugh and pat her head
And do their business

And more and more they hurt her so
She wonders why she’s outside there
They know their path and hers it seems
Yet she’s not part of their stream

And only she sees the belittlement

And feels her foolish place
They talk above her tiny head
About her silly ideas and requests

And they do the cruelest things
Like break her little heart and laugh
And still she sits and begs to be
Among them

"It’s always been this way for me
Just try to puncture in," she cries.
It must be something grand in there
Amongst their lies

--->

Today I wonder if I might release
The little girl
Invite her in with me where
Welcome she will be
Never more to feel excluded shame

Never more to beg to play the joining game.

This time the dream was nestle beds
His and mine and theirs amid a mess
I helped and heaved and set and tidied then
He tucked me in and laid with her instead.

## *2001* The Manly Thrill

I will not forget the fear

Of forecast trauma near

I’m cast to feel the fool

For seeing horror rule

The odds seem pointed there

The traffic’s heavy where

The school bus one and two

Take children home to you

“Such assholes, those,” he cries

I can’t believe my eyes

A curve is clear ahead

Pass two!  My fear!  My dread!

To kill the children too

To feel the shame undo

All else as fear encloaks

My chest my bones I spoke

Out loud “Please no, do not!”

He went.  Ignored my lot.

I shook I begged

Our friendship sagged

He laughed at my dismay

I threw the map away

My heart was pounding

Pounding still

So real so foolish

The manly thrill

## *2001* The Softest Word

The lips are closed  just loosely
Air pops lightly through
They make a gentle circle
The eyes lift skyward blue

The mouth draws gently broader
The sound becomes a smile
The head turns left to listen
As thoughts steep all the while

Then smiling lips they close
To linger on the hum
And air once in is out now
The softest word is poem

# *2001* This Spring

Two years ago this spring I watched your play
Then wailed my sorrow for the gap so grand
Since then I clamored daily and have found a way
To see the future on my doorstep land

Invisible be paths that run the parallel
Between them lay our lives' embankments steep
Sometimes I feel the shame of unshared lessons quell
My own ambition's wane and ebb.  So keep

Along the path and wonder where I travel
Fore or aft along the same unwinding track
Know, just know the mystery truth does ravel
Here and there yet never does look back

I like to wander still do fear to see

Accept the distance twixt the roads we don

I feel I know your hurt and joy within me

As summer days grow long and winter's gone.

# *2001* Train Wreck

If you were beheaded

And your head landed in my lap

I would kiss your forehead

And close your blue eyes.

I would capture your breath

And absorb the warmth from your red cheeks

I would tell your sister that I have your smiles

And that you left so pure

That she would take a piece of you

And thus you would endure

# *2001* Tuffatore (The Diver)

We’re all alone on a downward slide

Some have a steeper slope

Some burst excitement high atop

Some dig in heels, some hope

Some have a surface jagged with halts

As dawns break day by day

A welcoming toward the ultimate plunge yet

Most want to stay

## *2001* Two good beds

I heard the woman wonder why

She yearned for genetic progeny for years

When finally she adopted two terrific kids

And learned to love more purely

She wondered why it’d taken so long

She wondered about the fuss

The link of living is what mattered most

She learned now walks more surely

Now at a different stage of life

I learned the lesson same

Why does sleep no skin to skin

Imply I sleep alone!

In a cozy nest a few meters away

I can hear his massive breathing
I can almost see the centimeter of heat
That surrounds amid his hairy skin

I can hear him move and sure it’s true
I miss the whispers on some sweet nights
But contentment near beats discontent here
Two good beds make love endurely

## *2001* Useless Junk

Save me! Save me!

I've been coveting useless junk!

What a surprise hit me tonight

All of these things that I held so tight

Pieces of metal and wood

Electronic cloth all no good

Such waste I cannot give away

These things I've dragged with me each day

And does this mean that all's the same

To give it all away no claim

No sentimental meaning there at all

Just greedy grasps on dust my fall

I drag these foolish things around my neck

And wonder when my selfish ways will trek

Themselves for good and set me free

To laugh with friends unbound and pretense free.

## *2001* Who I Am

You can imagine:

I was a virgin when I wed and my former spouse is my only experience in bed or

You can imagine:

I was a whore before I wed and had a series of lovers during my married years or

You can imagine:

Anything in between these versions of what a woman's life might have been

The truth will be what you imagine

What happened has nothing to do with truth

Words cannot paint my life nor who I am

I walk today and into tomorrow who I am

You can imagine:

Who I will be and how I will look and move in fifteen years from now and

You can imagine:

Who I will walk among and how I will lead my life as future
days unfold and

You can imagine:

Every version you care to ponder of what a woman’s life
might become

The truth will be what you imagine

What will happen has nothing to do with truth

Words have not painted my life nor who I will be

I walk out of yesterday and into today who I will be

## *2001* Wonderment of Love

Oh wonderment of love refined then lost
Prosaic chats rend bursting at great cost
The simple tasks of life pass day to day
Preempting what is here and meant to stay

The breeze across my face, she knows it’s where
Belovéd fingers darted though my hair
The breath beneath the rhythm of our heart
That carries us beyond but yet apart

And simply so, it’s why we wander forth
With pores agape to invite all of worth
Yet fumble when it hits us full face up
Unable to be quenched by loving cup

So take the crumbs and droplets left behind

Impart them in a soup of heart and mind

Enjoy the pleasures passing day to day

And lay in wait for love to find her way

## *2002* Another Ending

No courtesan am I

Nor shall I ever be

Though through the theme dance I

To see

If magic might ignite

And take us back to where

We were ago one night

A pair

Thought I, though perchance not

At all was he with me

In love and trustful wrought

And free

So stead I feel the fool

And ponder how I’ve been
Trapped twixt sheets of cool
With him

In careless obligation
Waiting for the end
And freedom from frustration
Pretend

# *2002* Fond Farewell at Atlantic Dawn

I said farewell to the little boy
And the man bid me adieu
They circled round me snapped the cord
I bow now down to you

In gratitude for laughs we shared
The boy was coy the man was scared
And fond farewells will last when true
So bow now down do I to you

To flow my smiles and memories
And shed discomfort from my back
I humbly send forth blessings thick
With hope for both of you in fact

One especially for the boy

Who’d glance away and dance in wait
Of praise for oddities he'd boast
And flaunt and pose and imitate

The man with him a gruff veneer
Of patience lost for women near
So to the two who hurled me forth
I send full thanks for what it’s worth

# *2002* Make a List

Make a list

Laminate it

Post it in a prominent place

Commit it to memory

Believe it is true

Wonder if

There is truth beneath

The gruff crass breaths

That bark in my face

And embarrass me

Then halt

Wonder never more

Wait neither for

Some crumb of speech to

Make me believe what never was true

# *2002* Sagrada Familia

Neighbourhood: Sagrada Familia

One day in Spain, she brought me two glasses
She thought somehow I was not alone
I sat and I watched at the hundred blank passes
And drank the red wine in a Barcelona drone

A litre, no less, for two Euro ten
So easy to sip as the people pass by
But the empty glass glimmered and beckoned, and then
He lit his cigar with his walking stick high

A secret, a signal was given to me
Such a simple lean gesture of who I might be
And the wine lingered glowing as the trucks growled their way
Down the calle of children of Spaniards today

# *2002* Thank Heavens for Annie Lennox

Thank the Gods Lords and Goddess troupes
That Annie Lennox lives in me
She speaks in rhymes and rhythms sense
Enough to set me free

Today I’ve heard so many strong
And useful words where do I start?
Well!  That love does never end
And so there goes the heart

We seek, from this I can conclude,
A fit with one of those we love
And fits, well yes, they may deed end
As mitten warmth erases glove

## *2002* The Men who Make Me

The men who make me are one the same
Push toward pull apart nameless name
I take toward their angry plight
And run away in dark of night
The men who make me wake me
Forsake me tame

The youth befriend me in my journey here
Fresh fashion laughs constant clear
They lift themselves to life
Dream naught of tangled strife
The youth befriend me mend me
Send me cheer

The crone inside me whispers truths each day
Honest tough insightful price to pay
To listen casting off some dreams

To hear the voice is as it seems

So crone inside me hide me

Guide my way

Those men who make me crumble always into stories passed

Their essence drifts in winds and flows with rains through gullies fast

They stand and gawk in awe

They watch me pitch and yaw

Those men who make me quake me

Shake me vast

## *2002* The Window

Looking at a window
It's fun to imagine when
I could see and feel a person there
A conjurin' way back then

I can simply relive the burning pulse
The window would ignite
I'd know not if he's there
Nor who he's with so might

See him chatting happily
Or deep in thought at work
And away I'd go to glee or worry
I'd stare and dream and lurk

A distance safe and away

Only seeing the window there
Not him not you not next in line
But since, a window alone can flare

The same in me it proves, I s'pose
That all those dreams were glass and wood
And never truly did I see
Beyond inside, I never could.

# *2002* Yo Yo

I feel the pendulum has swung once more
We weigh the purpose of the gap
It speaks it screams the underscore
The silence the nuisance the same old trap

The cycle repeats its months and weeks
As future comes forth past rendezvous
And the plum rakes through and turns my head
And spins me and scrambles my thoughts of you

But luckily as the pattern takes shape
I smile with the sense of this normal game
The fun of the mystery the dance of deft
Make me think you hear me whisper your name.

# Part 4 – Sidebars

## selected context notes

# Acknowledgements

- Bob Pruden for being among the first to acknowledge my MoutheThePoem blog, before social media became endemic.

- Real fb friends for hitting like when I'd surreptitiously post a poem or two each year

- My family for giving me literacy and a mystical/emotional backdrop where poems popped out.

- Outdated cultural identity for granting me shame enough to purposefully defer publication. Not kidding. Grateful.

- Di, who originally received the collection in 2009.

- A few muses.

# Sidebars

There is no underlying theme in this collection.  The poems came from within a time frame, but many others were written then.  These were simply a sampled submission; a set that was re-discovered 12 years afterward.  Rather than slaving through the massive set of poems again, I trusted my judgement for this submission and suddenly felt ready to launch the collection as it stood.  A few poems triggered some sidebars of thought as I read through them, checking for typos and formatting the pages.

Also, some of the rhythmic ones are reproduced as audio files for spoken word presentation.  None of these have become songs, though I do have many songs too.  The audio presentations are linked in my MoutheThePoem blog which is on blogspot.com.

*Dear Davey* – A dream of a real person.

*Socks for Morons* – Just a playful take on the diametrically opposed.

*Depths to Depths*  - So, it's how we are collectively.  No?

*Embark Sara* – I was observing a young woman who could have been me.  I cannot remember who and am still searching holographic files to jar my memory. If I find out I'll post to MoutheThePoem.

*Find Your Place* – Hopeful.  LeSigh

*Grounds* – Strength in grief of a lost love

*Say a Little Prayer for Me* – I have never sent a telegram.

*Six Fifty Five* – The title is the record number in the poetry database.

*The Forest I Am* – I have a lovely wooded cabin where true silence lies.  Privilege.  Is it too rhymey?  I still like it.

--->

*The Otherworld –* Again, from dreams. I'm not psychoanalyst but, nah.

*Unrequited Love* - I have a vast series of meta-poetry. It has been a great healer for me. See also *The Softest Word.*

*Boy Man God* - Written in Siracusa.

*Destined* - This is in the same tone as the Carly Simon song, *No Secrets.*

*Hanged, no Launched* – Also written in Sicily. Dream and reality based.

*Goddess Queen Siracusa* – Another written in Italy. In countries where I am not fluent in the language, I have more head space for these kinds of poems.

*Latent Resentments Rise* – This is kind of grrrrr.

*Love in the Seventh Decade* – I wonder if it will be like this, in my seventies.

*Make a List –* This works.

*So Done I cry (The Death of WB Yeats)* – I was also moved to poetry by Annie Lennox. Go figure. BTW it was the Stephen Coote biography, *W. B. Yeats - A Life* (1998) that I'd finished reading when the tears came.

*The Call* – Every time I re-read this one, that Paul Simon song pops into my head, *Still Crazy after All These Years,* because of the words “old lover”. Now you won't be able to unthink that. Sorry.

*The Joining Game* – See also *Pretense* and *Stripping Dignity.*

*This Spring* – Parallel forevermore.

*Two Good Beds* – This doesn't work 100%.

*Who I Am* – Substitute “woman” for “person”? I am in control of my own edits, even 20 years later as consciousness evolves.

*Fond Farewell at Atlantic Dawn* – Mid-Atlantic.

*Sagrada Familia* – Written right beside Antoni Gaudi's project, which Wiki says might be done by 2026.

*The Window* – This isn't stalking, but therein lies the seed!

# Rhythm and Intonation

Rhythm can cannot always be avoided. Sometimes a poem flows out, like the pumping of blood from an open wound. It flows to the rhythm of life with a pulse between the ears and dumps itself onto the keyboard or through the pen. It is the invisible drum of poetry. Line breaks, indentations and the page presentation can help convey meaning too, but sometimes the rhythm is there, just completely in your face. I used to feel embarrassed by my rhythmic rhyming poems, but now, I like them. They aren't for everyone, but the playfulness provides some levity, possibly even in contrast to the tone. It can make things edgy.

Intonation is very important in a few of my poems. In these poems I can hear my tone of voice and word emphasis, though it does not come through in the text.

Here is a list of what I consider to my rhythm poems and intonation poems that definitely lend themselves to spoken word. These will be produced as audio files and place on my *MoutheThePoem* blogspot site. So, in case you don't feel the rhythm or sense the intonation when reading, you will be able to hear my personal interpretation in the audio file.

Intonation

Punch Out the Boys

Stripping Dignity

Depths to Depths

Deliver Me

Just a Little Bad

The Manly Thrill

--->

Rhythm

Away Away

Certain Sense of Love

Deny Spell Cast

Pretense

The Possibilities

The Impossibility

Fond Farewell at Atlantic Dawn

--->

# Afterward

Making poems often happens unconsciously. They spill out. They are never silly.  Save your poems. It is not the same as journaling, but your poems can be housed in the same place. Capture them. Smile when they show up. They may be on a post-it note or a serviette. The rhythm will often take the shape of the page! They could be keyboard driven or captured in a recording on your phone. Collect them. Poems reveal who you really are in a way that nothing else can. When you read them in years ahead, you will smile and realize how far you have come.

2000 Poems

Poems are but thoughts

With words between

We poets cannot say

The truths we mean

So lay down lines and punctuate

And keep it clean

Of what we sense and know

And only dream

Best wishes,

~~nancy

Nancy Ellen McLennan is a Manitoban. While amassing a full body of poetic work, she also wrote as a journalist for radio, print and online publications. She produced numerous documentary films including two historical reenactments, *the Castleavery Explosion* (1986) and *Recital at The Aud* (1989). A serial memoir of her youth in Winnipeg's North End, *the Wartime House in Shaughnessy Heights*, was published in 2009. She publishes opinion and observation pieces in her blog, *The Slicery*, and numerous of her short stories can be found online as well. This is her first collection of poems in hard copy. *Finding Strength – a collection of turn-of-the-century poems* was released concurrently in epub form. Selected audio files of poems by Nancy Ellen McLennan are found at her MoutheThePoem blog. She is also a songwriter.

*bph~publication*

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